

# RUTLAND HERALD.

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER, DESIGNED TO BE A GENERAL REPOSITORY OF POLITICAL, AGRICULTURAL, DISCUSSIONAL, MORAL, MISCELLANEOUS AND ENTERTAINING READINGS.

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## AN INCONVENIENT ACQUAINTANCE.

BY HELLER BENCKLEY.

"Mr. Lorimere is not at home, sir," replied a rosy-cheeked Irish girl, to the query of an individual in a shabby brown coat, and strapless pantaloons, who stood on the stoop of one of the most elegant mansions in Bond street.

"Of course not, my dear, Mr. Lorimere's never home—but Mrs. Lorimere is at home, and Miss Lorimere is engaged, and so is Miss Lorimere,"

Miss Lorimere replied the girl—for she recognized a certain feeling smile about the thin mouth, and a shrewd wink of the grey lynx eye, against the owner of which she had seen the waiter more than once close the door.

"You've a fine bloom, my dear, you'd better come to Mrs. Lorimere, or I shall have to find my own way."

"Mrs. Lorimere is engaged, sir, you had better call again."

"Engaged is she?" said Mr. Badger, deliberately placing himself in a comfortable leaning position against the door. "Call again, eh? he slowly added, and casting around a few furtive glances, though he was seeking some accustomed passage to the lady's presence."

"Whose child is that? Mrs. Lorimere's?"

The girl nodded.

"Come here, my pretty little dear, here's something for you," he called to a red-haired urchin, whose beggar-like face was inquiringly protruded from behind the back door. "Here's something for you."

"And he drew from his capacious coat pocket a handful of pence and pennies, and held them coaxingly towards the child. The boy at once drew back, and then unable to withstand the temptation, bashfully approached, grasped the offered treasure, and would have made his escape, but Mr. Badger caught one of his arms."

"Where's your mamma? Here's another hand—"

"Ma's in the back parlor clearing the breakfast."

"Well, tell her a gentleman wants to see her, and will try what else I can find in my pocket for her."

"Away ran the child towards the back parlor, and Mr. Badger seized the opportunity to step into the house, following as closely on the fugitive's heels as he could, he was quite home in three pursuits. He reached the parlor just as the boy cried, 'Ma, somebody wants to see you!'"

"Mr. Badger bowed, as though he felt himself complimented."

"The girl said your ladyship was engaged, but I thought I should be no disturbance to your ladyship—and this beautiful boy—what a lovely face!"

"Tenderly stroking the child's flame-colored head."

"Here the mother's countenance relaxed into a smile, and she pushed a chair towards her."

"Your ladyship's child! I presume?—resembles so much your ladyship, that I should have supposed your ladyship too young to be his mother."

"Miss Lorimere this time smiled positively, and replied in a very gentle tone, 'That is my only one!'"

"Indeed! a noble boy! what a head! you've a kind of phrenology? Must take him to Fowler, the phrenology man—shouldn't wonder if he told you that this child stood a chance of being President of the United States—remarkable head!"

"Shouldn't wonder at all myself at seeing him. Great country this—very great country."

"Take a seat."

"Thank you, your ladyship—thank you, I'll take it if I do. Very pretty carpet you have on the floor—came from Chester's—all the house furnished with the same? That puts me in mind of business. Fact is, your ladyship, I called to see if I could get Mr. Lorimere—by the way, your ladyship looks a little like him at this moment—"

"By his dash in to a T—I was saying, your ladyship, I want to get Mr. Lorimere to settle on this very carpet. Chester is growing very impatient."

"Indeed, sir, I thought the carpet was paid for long ago."

"Oh! no, your ladyship, a slight mistake—the china cups too—pretty pattern, aren't they?—from Drummer's—I've a small demand on them."

"You surprise me. I chose the china myself, and I am almost sure it was paid for at the time they were made."

"Slight mistake, your ladyship—nothing more. As if I could get your ladyship just to set the china before Mr. Lorimere, and persuade him to give me a check for these things, I should esteem it a great favor."

"Certainly shall, sir. I am very much mortified to hear that the bill has stood so long."

"When shall I call again, your ladyship? This morning?"

"If you please. We dine at half past three."

"Lorimere is always at home at dinner. I'll speak to him without fail."

"Much obliged to you, your ladyship. Chester Co. can't wait—nor Drummer neither. I'll call this afternoon. Here are more pence for you. What an eye he has got! His father's eye—just the eye for a great man. I'll call at half past three, your ladyship."

"With these words he bowed himself backwards out of the room."

"As he limply ran down the steps with a habitual chuckle, which denoted particular satisfaction, he encountered one of his particular acquaintances."

"Heb! Brindley! How are you getting on my good fellow?"

"What, Badger, is that you? Thank fortune I'm getting on so well that I'm not afraid of meeting with you in the streets."

"That's what I call elegant and explicit. Did you notice what an elegant house I came out of? Been paying a visit to one of the loveliest women in New York. Great country this—great country!"

"Mrs. Lorimere's? You've got a bill against her husband, I suppose, but what do you go after the wife for?"

"That's a peculiarity of mine—I like talking to handsome women, there's nothing like it in creation. I never trouble the husbands much until I see what I can do with them through their wives. Nothing like getting a woman to help carry on a suit against her husband. I collect more bad debts from such pleading than any other. Nothing men hate like having the women know about their affairs, and having them worry them into paying their debts. Great country this, great country!"

"Are the women then, always so anxious to pay?"

"To be sure, most of them have got conscience enough to make up the lack in their husbands' hearts too. I've a receipt for getting at a woman's heart."

"Who is this Lorimere?"

"Lorimere? Why he's a Wall street broker. A man who made a little money by speculating, lost six times as much as he ever made, and has got the reputation of being worthless he ever made and lost together. This because he lives in a large house, and owes large sums to half the shopkeepers in New York. Great country this, great country!"

"Is there hope of his paying?"

"He'll pay me every stiver. You'll see, every body pays me. I lay my plans to suit my people. Don't catch sparrows and hawks in the same net. Lorimere's father was a tailor. The old man was worth a mint of money, and bought nothing with it but pride. He died, and the children inherited his pride and got none of his money. Young Lorimere is turning the cold shoulder upon all his old friends and trying to get into fashionable society. His supposed wealth has gathered a troop of gray hangers-on, like wasps about a beehive, around him. Nothing he dreads so much as being cut by them. Now you see, but I can't let you into my plans. The train's well laid, trust me for that."

"What an elegant young man that is walking in front of us! I wonder who he is?"

"That! By the cut of his coat that must be Bill Flashing."

"An acquaintance of mine. He's paying his addresses to the young lady with him. A fortune I hear. What an air she has! I don't doubt she's pretty, excuse me my dear fellow, I have a bill in my pocket for \$150 which my friend Flashing owes to his livery-stable keeper. I will join him."

"What! not when he is walking with his lady?"

"To be sure, why not? That is the time to make an impression. Besides I want a good look at her. If I get an answer, I will join you further down."

"Mr. Badger withdrew his arm from Brindley's and limping a few steps forward very unceremoniously placed the disgraced member within reach of the astonished young fellow. Mr. Badger took no notice of his discomposure, but staring at the young lady made one of his profound and graceful salutations."

"Mr. Brindley purposely passed them, to enjoy the troubled look of the assailed young gentleman, the confusion of the belle, and truly delightful ease and self-possessed grace of Mr. Badger."

"Mr. Brindley walked half a dozen blocks before he joined him."

"Well, Badger, have you dropped your prey so soon?"

"Only given the fish a little of the line with the bait in his mouth. Flashing promised to see me to-morrow and fork out the shiners. Great country this, great country. Tried to put it off a week, but I kept hold of his arm, and looked at the girl, as much as to say, what a fool he takes me for! His tight coat must have grown uncomfortable just then, so I should think from his fidgeting. Sweet girl she was—looked at me from head to foot, nothing I like so well as a woman's eye. Great country this—"

"Where are you going now?"

"To Wall street. We are almost there. This is half the hour I shall catch a particular friend of mine, with his cronies around him. He'll have to shell out this time, or I shall take up my quarters for the rest of the day. I took lodgings once in the same house when I had a large debt to collect from him. I followed him about like his shadow—he couldn't turn without seeing me. He had to pay at last—said he felt as if he was releasing his soul from the old Nick. Here we are. Good by. I shall be engaged for an hour or two."

"Good by—success to you!"

"Mr. Badger entered the office. It was filled with persons busily engaged in conversation. Several of the group recognized him and looked somewhat inclined to get out of his way. Very good-naturedly thrusting out his hand to each in turn he generously dealt round a few hearty shakes. He then put his head over the shoulder of a venerable looking gentleman, whose back was turned, and cried out,

"Eb—Mr. Cash, my good sir, how do you do? Delighted to see you—it's with you I want to talk."

"What! old cloven-foot! is that you!—Here again? Now, I'll make a bargain with you. I'll pay you that bill, and give you ten dollars to boot, if you will promise never to shut out the sun light from these doors again; and never to take another bill against me in your life! Let any

other man do it—but I can't stand your mode of proceeding!"

"Done! down with the dust! I'll never take another bill against you as long as I live. Great country!"

"There it is, now the next time I meet you I shall be saved from the sin of wishing you had a black cap drawn over your face!"

Badger took the money, gave his usual chuckle, bowed the silent quick bow he kept in reserve for the male portion of the species, and hobbled out of the office, muttering, 'that man's a gentleman! He pays proper tribute to my talents. I'll never take another bill against him as long as I live!'"

We will not follow Mr. Badger in his morning visits but take leave of him until quarter past three."

In half an hour found him once more on the steps of Mr. Lorimere's mansion. His loud ring this time was answered by the waiter. The man's half uttered 'Mr. Lorimere is out' was interrupted by Badger.

"I have an appointment with Mrs. Lorimere," and pushing by the disconcerted attendant he entered the drawing room.

Mrs. Lorimere, dressed in the richest attire, was sitting upon the sofa. She hardly noticed Mr. Badger's entrance. Her eyes looked red, and there was a crimson spot on her cheek that betokened as much anger as grief.

Mr. Badger gallantly sat himself beside her, stretched his better foot foremost, and in an insinuatingly sympathizing tone feared she was unwell.

"Thank you, sir, I am quite well."

"Your ladyship's beautiful little boy is ill perhaps?"

"No, he is well."

"Mr. Lorimere is not come home yet, your ladyship?"

"Mr. Lorimere dines out. He has but just left me!"

"Ah! indeed! Suppose he'll be home to tea?"

"I am much engaged this afternoon, I could wait."

The lady gave him a supplicating glance, and drew a sigh.

"He did not say when he would come back. He may not return until late at night! Here Mrs. Lorimere showed a very evident desire to oblige."

"Don't be distressed your ladyship, I don't mind waiting at all," said he in a peculiarly tender tone, "or, perhaps I'll call again to-morrow. Be so good as to remind Mr. Lorimere to night, and again in the morning, and once more as he leaves the house, of those little demands. I shall find it quite convenient to call to-morrow. Pray don't be distressed!"

"I will certainly remind him, sir, I am mortified to death about them. Depend upon it they shall be paid."

"I'm sure of that now you've taken the matter into your own hands. Don't let me keep you from your dinner. I'll see you to-morrow your ladyship, without fail!"

With this consoling assurance, Mr. Badger took his leave.

The next morning Mr. Lorimere gave strict orders to the servants not to admit a gentleman with a long thin face, a white hat, and with but one decent foot. Mr. Badger who was gifted with some faculty resembling second sight had foreseen this.

He paid no visit to Bond street that day.

About three o'clock he entered the fashionable tailoring establishment on the corner of Wall street and Broadway.

"How do you do, Mr. Seefeld?"

"How are you Mr. Badger? What can I do for you to day?"

"Nothing, thank you, but permit me to see what is going on in the world from these fine windows of yours."

"Certainly sir?"

Mr. Badger carefully stationed himself in one corner of the large window which looks out upon Broadway.

"I wonder who that fellow is lying in wait for, said Seefeld to one of his clerks. 'Here, William, watch, and tell me when he pounces upon it.'"

A number of Mr. Badger's friends (all persons from whom he had money to collect, he styled his intimate friends) passed by the window on their way to dinner. Still he kept post. At last two gentlemen of gay exterior and laughing very merrily, came in sight. One was evidently a foreigner of at least supposed distinction. Badger, with outstretched hand, rushed from his hiding place just as they got opposite to the door.

"How do you do, Lorimere? Glad to see you—been looking for you all day. Introduce me to your friend. Count Morganini is it not? Happy to make your acquaintance, sir," and Mr. Badger held out his enormous palm in preparation of encircling the delicately gloved fingers of the count.

"Pray excuse me at present, Mr. Badger," said Mr. Lorimere. "I am particularly engaged."

"Shan't detain you a minute, my dear fellow, only want to know when you will settle those accounts of Chester & Co's and Drummer's. I'm so happy too, to make the count's acquaintance. Been long in this country, sir? See you often in Broadway. Fine women we have here—Great country this—great country!"

The count gave a look which the pencil better than the pen could express; and dropping Mr. Lorimere's arm, silently bowed to him, then to Mr. Badger, and sauntered down Broadway.

"This is too bad, Badger," exclaimed Lorimere. "I've been trying to get acquainted with that man for a month, and have just succeeded!"

"Glad you did succeed—I attribute my own success to that. Did you see what a bow he gave me?"

"Duce take his bow—just when he had promised to ride out with me!—You've put me out of humor—I can't listen to you now."

"No. Well I'll just walk towards home with you" (seizing his arm), "and you shall tell me when I shall call to see you. There's no house I like calling at better than yours. Sweet lady, that wife of yours—delightful to talk to!"

Mr. Lorimere mutteringly coupled his wife's sweetness with expressions too emphatic for repetition.

"Excuse me now, I tell you, if there's money due from me, why don't you sue? Sue—sue, I tell you—you're welcome to sue to-morrow!"

"That's not my way of transacting business. I sue for the money myself till I get it. I'm my own lawyer, and never loose a cause."

"I shall be late to dinner, and am going to jump into an omnibus. Good morning!"

"I haven't dined myself yet," said Badger, without releasing the captive arm. "You take dinner en famille, I suppose? I shouldn't mind taking a cut with you."

"I expect friends!"

Well, that makes no difference, I don't mind strangers. I'm a hale fellow well met with all kinds of company. Here comes an omnibus."

Mr. Lorimere gave a look at the omnibus. It appeared full. Leaping on the step and taking his stand in front of the door, he called out lustily to the driver, "Go on," and before Mr. Badger could hobble up to him, the omnibus was dashing along at full speed.

"I'll worry you a little for this, my fine fellow," said he, as he turned to retrace his steps. "I'll make the acquaintance of more of your acquaintances before I've done. There's no baffling Nat Badger."

A couple of days after the above incident, Mrs. Lorimere was in the parlor with some morning visitors, whose carriage stood before the door. She felt particularly happy that day. Her only daughter, a young girl in the first bloom of womanhood, was sitting in the window trying to comprehend the delightful nothings of a promising young slip of the aristocracy. The mother fondly believed he was aspiring to her daughter's hand. Suddenly the conversation was interrupted by a loud discussion between the waiter and another person at the door. A well known voice struck upon Mrs. Lorimere's ear. With ill disguised agitation she rose herself to close the parlor door. This was the worst movement she could have made. Mr. Badger, who was trying to force his way past the waiter, caught a glimpse of her figure, and rushing up to her, exclaimed, "I'm delighted to see your ladyship—delighted. You're looking enchantingly—Mr. Lorimere at home? Suppose not—I can wait."

Without noticing Mrs. Lorimere's half uttered remonstrance, or rather, interpreting and receiving it as a welcome, the gentleman coolly entered the parlor.

"Mr. Badger," the lady at length mustered courage and voice to say, "you wish to see Mr. Lorimere on business; you will be more private in the back parlor, if you will do me the favor to step in there."

"Thank you; thank you, your ladyship—no consequence in life. My business is never private. I'm a man too of too much taste to be contented in an other room in the house except where the mistress is." And Mr. Badger bowed more profoundly than the present fashion of petit maitre would permit many to imitate.

"Don't trouble yourself to apologise, I am quite comfortable here; dropping himself slowly into a luxurious arm chair. "That's Miss Lorimere, I suppose. Very like you, your ladyship. How do you do, Miss? Never had the happiness of seeing you before—your mother and myself are acquaintances."

Miss Lorimere looked bewildered. The gentleman at her side stared, and after a few moments, feeling himself, we presume, amongst uncongenial spirits, rose and took his leave.

Mrs. Lorimere, in resigned despair, attempted to resume the conversation with her guests.

"You were at young Mrs. Fleece's soire last night, were you not?" demanded she.

Before the lady addressed could answer, Mr. Badger interposed—

"Mrs. Fleece! What! Harry Fleece's wife! an acquaintance of mine; I know her very well—Strange affair that about his father! I was just going to make them a visit. Finest chairs in his house I ever sat upon. I shall if I can't get them settled for to-day. Great country this—great country."

Mrs. Lorimere hurriedly went on. I hear Mrs. Delaney was the belle of the evening."

"Beg your pardon, your ladyship," this time addressing not Mrs. Lorimere, but the lady beside him. "What Mrs. Delaney is that? The wife of Alfred Delaney, who beat his first wife to death! I've bills against him for more thousands than he likes; I must be the same. His wife's the handsomest woman in New York. Great friend of mine."

Just at this moment, Mr. Lorimere entered, and the visitors rose to take their departure.

"Ah! Lorimere, I've caught you at last; delightful society you receive—I've been enjoying it exceedingly. Should like nothing better than sitting in your parlor a few hours every day—if you are willing"—drawing up the right corner of his left eye, and looking at the afflicted man in a manner peculiarly his own.

"Mr. Badger, I desire in future that you will call at my office. I have not been used to this treatment."

"You'll soon get accustomed to it, my dear fellow, under my administration. I make calls to suit my convenience; I'm glad to be so well received—When people find my visits troublesome they know how to dispense with them. I'm a man of business, and never call but on business, although I take pleasure at the same time."

"Troublesome, sir? Why, I never—angrily began Mr. Lorimere."

"Why don't you pay him Frank, and have done with it?" whispered Mrs. Lorimere, tears of mingled passion and mortification rolling down her cheeks.

"Permit me to settle my own affairs, madam, without your interference." Mrs. Lorimere, weeping, left the room.

Badger called upon me to-morrow at ten, and I promise to pay for these confounded carpets—I can't stand this."

"And the china too?"

"If possible."

"Then good morning. Don't fail me—I shan't fail you, you may be sure. Great country this—great country." With these words Mr. Badger took his leave, but not without first insisting on a shake of the friend's hand.

The next morning, at ten precisely, one of the numerous bills in Mr. Badger's hands, against Mr. Lorimere was defrayed. This was but a drop in the bucket. Three or four visits to the house were made ineffectually. The waiter had learnt or dis-

covered his presence through some secret loop-hole. He never gained admittance. But as Mr. Badger expressed it, he was not the man to be baffled. He waited a full month for a good opportunity of putting his ingenious designs into execution.

Mrs. Lorimere issued cards for a party at which she hoped to assemble most of the gentry, and especially the young gentleman before spoken of, whom she hoped would cultivate a better acquaintance with her daughter.

Mrs. Lorimere also wished to introduce her daughter, for the first time, into society, and no time nor expense was spared in preparing for the occasion.

Beautiful as Mariette and Miss Whittingham's skill, to say nothing of Nature's, could make her, looked Mrs. Lorimere on the evening of the ball. She stood in the blaze of light, at one end of the splendid drawing-room; and the gaily dressed figures that hovered around her, in addition to the coronet of diamonds that encircled her fair brow, gave her the air of a sovereign receiving the homage of her devoted subjects. The persons she most desired to see were present, Kendall's band had arrived, Weller had surpassed himself in the arrangements of the supper table. Her triumph was complete. The evening was far advanced, most of the guests were assembled. An unusually loud ring turned Mrs. Lorimere's expectant gaze to the door. She would rather at that moment have seen a ghost than the form which, arrayed in its outer Sunday best, presented itself to her view.

"How do you do, your ladyship?" vociferated Mr. Badger, the moment he distinguished Mrs. Lorimere. "Delighted to see you look so charmingly—seizing the lady's hand in his own he gave it an unusually lusty shake."

Miss Lorimere at that moment crossed the room. Badger let go of the mother's hand, elbowed his way through the crowd, and striding up to the fair girl loudly accosted her by name. The frightened maiden drew back, repressing a cry of astonishment. The guests rose to survey the stranger, whose appearance created such a sensation.

Mr. Lorimere who from the back parlor heard that there was some disturbance, little suspecting its nature, now innocently made his appearance. Badger pounced upon his hand the instant it was within his reach.

"Delighted to see you, my dear fellow! delighted!" Mr. Lorimere was speechless, with a bewildered look, at last he drew Badger's arm in his, and led him to a more retired part of the next room.

"Really Badger, this intrusion is beyond endurance. Not so much beyond endurance as being kept ringing the bell at your street door half an hour every day of a cold winter's morning, and then finding the door remain shut. You should keep better servants, my dear fellow, indeed you should."

"But Mr. Badger—"

"But, my dear friend, if you don't like my company know how to get rid of it. I never come to a party, to which the people have forgotten to send me an invitation, unless I carry such an invite as this in my pocket."

"Positively you shall have the money if you call at my office to-morrow."

"That's all I want. Now I'll just stay to get a little refreshment and then be off, for I don't admire late hours myself. Great country this—great country."

While this conversation was going on, the whisper of "Who is he?" "What is he?" ran round the rooms in as many tones as there are keys to a piano. "I shouldn't wonder if he was a constable," said one.

"Really! What a shocking people to visit! I shall drop them after this."

"I can't imagine who he is!" hisped an intellectual looking young gentleman, who had been evincing some dexterity in keeping out of Mr. Badger's sight. "It's Mr. Badger, the collector!" squeaked the cracked voice of a gossiping old maid.

"They say there's not an article in the house paid for."

"How dreadful! but it is what I suspected—"

"So did I—I always said—"

The lady would have continued to prove her prognosticating sagacity, had not Mrs. Lorimere, at that moment, overhearing the remarks made around her, fallen into violent hysterics. She was carried out of the room, followed by her husband and daughter. During their absence, most of the guests dispersed. But not until Mr. Badger had recognized all his particular friends, shaken hands with them and informed them what a great country they lived in.

A couple of months after the above occurrence, the following conversation took place between Mr. and Mrs. Lorimere.

"I am so happy Frank," said the lady, "that we are going to have the auction to-morrow, and that you will really pay those horrid bills and let me live in peace in lodgings."

"Why I see very little use to not paying them, or living in the style we have been doing, since every friend worth having has dropped us. Ever since that unfortunate bill, Mrs. Weathercock, and Mrs. Gravelton, and Mrs. Delaney, and all that set have never been near us. And Laura's lover, Mr. Flourant, never called after the day he met Badger, did he?"

"Never. Well, I will stipulate never to see any of them again if I can only be sure that I have taken my last look of Mr. Badger's face."

"After to-morrow I may promise you with safety, my dear, that he shall claim no further friendship with us. And the next time you find me running in to any unwarrantable extravagance, just whisper in my ear, will you—Remember your friend the Collector."

When the body feels the least disposed to exercise, it generally stands the most in need of exercise.

"I am the victim of an unrequited attachment," as the fellow said when the sheriff called upon him.

A pleasant thought.—"Oh mother! a bee stung me!"

"Never mind, child," replied the mother, "it mistook thee for a flower."